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Dr. *Stillingfleet's* S E R M O N,

B Y S O M E

Nonconformists,

B E I N G T H E

P E A C E A B L E D E S I G N Renewed.

W H E R E I N

The Imputation of Schism wherewith the
Doctor hath charged the *Nonconformists* Meetings,
is removed : Their Nonconformity justified : and
Materials for Union* drawn up together, which
will heal both Parties.

Decker 2/46

Are they Ministers of Christ? so are We.

London, Printed for J. Janeway in *Queens-head-
Alley*, near *Paternoster-Row*, 1680.

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TABLE D-2 (Continued)

will bear fruit.

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Section printed for 2nd time

The Peaceable Design Renewed, in Answer to Dr. Stillingfleet.

WHereas it hath pleased the Worthy and Learned Dr. *Stillingfleet* to Preach, and Print a Sermon, wherein he hath laid a universal charge of Schism upon the Meetings of the whole body of *Nonconformists* throughout the Nation: we cannot but think it necessary, in regard to himself, and to the City (before whom he preached), and in regard to the Parliament against they sit, to present to him, and all men, our Apology, though we revive it to that end; especially seeing an humble state alone of our Defence (which seems really to be yet quite unknown to this otherwise candid Doctor) may perhaps give satisfaction, when all dispute and retortion of words does but ordinarily blow the coals, and raise up greater division among Brethren.

It is, we know, the happiness and birth-right of the People of this Nation, that if they lye under any grievance, they may have recourse to the Higher Powers when assembled: And there is no burden whereof we ought to be more sensible, than that which lies upon our Consciences. We do humbly deprecate therefore all displeasure, and hope that it will not be ill taken at this Time, if we assume so much liberty, To shew at least what ails us: To make our Apology for that wherein we seem to offend; and, To offer something for a general redress: Especially seeing a little collection only out of several Papers of one Person alone (whom we name not) will serve this triple occasion.

It is these three things are designed in this Discourse. A modest account of the *Nonconformists* Meetings: With some taste of their Reasons for Nonconformity; And the way of Accommodation in the matter of Religion.

There are divers sorts of *Nonconformists*, and they have their Meetings we know, not all on the same reasons. There are some who have been, and are for our Parochial Churches, who are satisfied with their constitution, and if they might have freedom, would

still choose them : And there are others that are in their Inclinations for the Congregational way only.

For our parts, who have put this Paper together, we profess our selves of the former sort, and do here declare in the behalf of our selves, and others of our Brethren, that we do not go from the Parish-Church in opposition to it, as if such Congregations were no Churches, being very deeply sensible, when our Lord hath commanded that the Tares should not be plucked up for fear of endangering even but *some of the Wheat*, what an unaccountable thing it is like to be to him, if we should go to root up *all the Wheat* for fear of the Tares ; which, to Un-church whole Parishes, were to do : Nor is it out of affectation, pride, vanity, ostentation, faction, or self-advantage, that we do it. We could not answer such a charge as lies against us, if we did so.

Two things therefore we will acknowledg, that our Parish-Churches are true Churches : And that it is our duty consequently to desire and endeavour their Union and Prosperity. And what would the Doctor, or any Conformist have of us more, unless it be also to join with them there in the participation of the Ordinances which some of us refuse not neither, upon convenient occasion.

The ground then upon which we offer our Plea for the cause we undertake, we will give here impartially. As we grant those two things to be our duty, so must we assume that, which will not, and cannot be deny'd us, that it is the duty likewise of those who are set apart to the Office of the Ministry (supposing them every way to be fit and called) to preach the Gospel by way of discharge of that Office. We have the Apostles express authority and example for this, who when they were threatned, and commanded to speak no more in Christs Name, have left us their answer on Record, *We ought to obey God rather than Man*. We have the precedent also of the first three hundred years after these Apostles, when the Gospel was never preached but contrary to the will of the Magistrate, that is, against the Laws and Edicts of the Emperours.

Which observation by the way, may alone suffice for the redressing a slip of the Pen which hath fell from another the like eminent person, that is Dr Tillotson, in a late Sermon of his likewise, where he is offering a Position to this effect. *That no man (in his apprehension) hath warrant from Conscience, for preaching even the true Religion, so as to make proselytes to it, in a Country where a contrary Religion (though false) is established, unless he either hath an extraordinary commission, or the provi-*

providence of God makes way for it, by the Magistrates permission. It is true, that the Protestants do not use to preach under the Inquisition, nor the Jesuits in the *Mahometan Court*, but this is no *Demonstration*: Affirmative precepts the Doctor knows, bind *semper*, but not *ad semper*. There is prudence therefore to be used, and Pearls need not be cast where they will be certainly trampled upon: Nevertheless let a man have but an *ordinary call*, and be deliberately convinced in his conscience that by his Preaching even in such a place, he shall convert a Nation, or really bring any such glory to God, as that by it, there is no doubt I hope about the obligation, but that he should be always ready *not only to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem for the name of Christ Jesus.*

Now (to go on) we must lay down this Rule, that when two duties come together, so that we cannot perform the one, but we must omit the other, the *greater duty* must take place of the *less*. The rule appears in its own light, and also from Scripture; *I will have mercy (saith God) and not sacrifice.* What is the meaning, but that when acts of *Righteousness* and *Mercy* fall in, such duties as that of *Sacrifice*, which are less, must give way. Here then is our case plainly, which of these is the greater duty? We are to seek Unity: and to preach the Gospel. If we keep our Parish-Churches, we must not preach the Gospel: If we preach the Gospel, we must go to these private Meetings. Which of these is indeed of greatest moment to the glory of God, and the Peoples salvation? *In general*, which is the greatest matter, that the Gospel of Christ Jesus be preached, or the Union of our Parish Churches be promoted? *In particular*, whether shall any of us, who have a call on occasion to Preach at such a time, place, or company, do more service to God by going and doing it, or by refusing and going to our Parish-Church for the sake of unity, for which we have still other seasons? And which is the *greater evil*, to have the people of a Parish only divided into several places, to hear the Ministers of both persuasions preach to them (when this too shall not hinder them being parts still or Members of the same Parochial Society): or that all the Preachers and Ministers in the Nation, but those only who *Conform*, should have their mouths stopt, and Talents buried?

How! when there are so many of them? So many of them truly serious, and painful Labourers? So many of them that actually do so much good, and the everlasting welfare of thousands of mens souls depend upon it? What is *Parochial Union* in comparison? We will appeal

appeal to the Consciences of every upright equal person, (whether *Conformist* or *Nonconformist*) that fears God, to give Judgment. The preaching of the Gospel, and particular *Assemblies*, are of *Divine*, *Parochial Churches* are of *Human* Institution. That which is of *Divine*, is undeniably to be prefer'd before that which is of *Human* appointment.

For the great Charge then against us of Schism, we answer: Schism is a *Causeless breach of the Churches Union, a causeless separation from her Communion*, the Communion of a Church whereof we are members, or should be. Let either of these learned men or any that hath read any thing about Schism, tell us, if we do not define it right, by a separation that is *causeless*; for if there be a *cause*, the separation will be justified, as it is between us, and the Church of *Rome*. Now when the case between the *Conformists*, and us, is so open, and in the face of the Sun, that unless we *set*, and *keep up* these honest *Conventicles*, the whole Generation of these *Nonconformist* Ministers must be laid aside from the Exercise of their Office, for ought we see, as long as these men do hold, whatsoever in the mean while becomes of the Souls of so many multitudes: What Apology, Defence, or Account shall we here need more, than this only, *Is there not a cause?*

But stay! Do we *Ministers* go about here to justify our selves in our Preaching, and leave the People in Schism? God forbid! We do apprehend that *Hearing* and *Preaching* are *Relata*, which do mutually *put* and *destroy* one another. That consequently the Peoples meeting is Authorized by our Commission. We suppose them not indeed to come out of any Principles of Separation, we do not need to do so: We suppose them rather to stand only on the Plea we offer them, *Occasional Greater Edification*. That is the same Plea still with ours, the Plea of *Greater Duty*. It is not in contempt to the Government that they come, nor out of neglect of their own *Minister*, with scandal to their Neighbours. They come not to any end inconsistent with the Rule of Charity, and Concord. But they are convinced in their Consciences that they do Edifie more by Hearing the plain *Nonconformist*, and so seek entirely only the *Greater Profit* of their Souls, by these means. In *London* now, it is manifest, that the Churches will not there hold their People; and the Assemblies of *Presbyterians* are (there) upon this account nothing else but so many Additions, Helps, or Supplies to the Parish defect: And what hurt can there be more in it, than for one man to have under him two or three Curates? In some places there are *Nonconformists*, who have been *Ministers* formerly in the place, or there.

thereabouts, where they live; and when both the People, and they do own themselves in some measure still under the same Relation, here is something more to be said, as to them, for their Justification. However, if nothing of this be, there is yet some Universal impression on the hearts of most honest people, which makes them tenderly sensible of the wrong that we have suffered, in being turn'd out of the Vineyard for our consciences. And what if any do think themselves bound hereupon in the sight of God, for the delivering their own souls from the participation of their sins that have ejected us, to come sometimes to hear us, by the way of acknowledging our Ministry, and to give respect to those they think worthy, that by this countenance of theirs toward us, they may both bear their Testimony against the iniquity, and offer so much as lies in their Sphere toward our Restitution; who can say, but they have Reason? Who shall hinder them from taking into their mouths what we have said before, and are ready to say again, *Is there not a Cause?* They are words of *David* to his surly Elder Brethren, who are offended for his being about the Business he was sent. *And David said, what have I done? is there not a Cause?*

To this Apology, we know, it will be said by the Episcopal Party (for nothing else that we know can be said to any purpose), *But you may conform.* If so, we must then desire of one, or both, of these learned, moderate, and judicious Doctors, to contribute but this one thing toward it, that is to answer our ensuing Objections, and those especially which concern the Political part of Conformity, about the *Oxford Oath*, and Subscription. If there be but one Particular imposed on us as a condition of Conformity, which we prove to be sinful, and they cannot resist it, there is no man; this Doctor knows well, hath been more forward than himself to let us know out of *Hales*, That it is *not the Refuser, but the Imposer is guilty of the Schism.* Let us proceed therefore to the second part of our Task, though since our first Impression (which was *Anno 1675.*) this is done more fully by another.

There are Three things enjoyned in the Act of Uniformity. *Re-ordination. The Declaration. The Subscription.*

We begin with the Threshold, *Re-ordination.* It must be acknowledged by both Parties, That *Re-ordination* is an uncouth thing, quite against the hair of the literate World, whether Fathers, Counsels, Schoolmen, or Modern Divines, Protestants and Papists; and put usually into the same predicament (and more especially by *Austin*) with Re-baptization. If the present Bishops therefore

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in the imposing of it, would have stood by it, and maintained the Lawfulness of it, as being neither against the Law of Nature nor Positive Institution: but as having rather the Example of the Apostles, and of *Paul* and *Barnabas* more particularly for it, with what else by some is urged, against the stream barely of human Authority: This would perhaps have looked handsome, and the ingenuity of it would have been notable: But when they would generally have it imposed, and yet disown it, and be ashamed of it, in so much as (though there be few or none ordained by Presbyters, but believe the validity of that Ordination) they would have our former Ministry to be null, and make us contented in effect to be held but Usurpers of holy things, Sacrilegious persons, and all our Ministerial Acts void, as the Acts of meer Laicks before, it is really so intollerable, we cannot bear them. It is true, there is one instance from Antiquity out of *Athanasius*, of some persons with *Ischyras* among them, whom they would not allow (according as they hold) to be Ministers, because one *Columbus* that ordained them, was only a Presbyter. Unto which may be added, the Story of the purblind Bishop, in the *Hispaine* Council, *Circa* An. 648: But we answer (in the sense as we remember) of Dr. *Field* on the Church; It is one thing what they judged according to their *Ecclesiastical Canons*; and another what we ought to judge according to the Word of God. The Scripture makes no difference between Bishop and Presbyter, the Superiority and Inferiority arising after in the Church: And when we are made Christs Ministers, and put in office by him, according to his Word, how shall that Authority be vacated for something wanting only in the Constitutions of Men? Here is a matter of Infinite wrong, which the opinion of these Men does us. It takes away the Office Christ hath given us, and holds it null. If it was a grievous thing in the late times to put one of these Ministers out of his Place only, what is it to put so many of us out of our Office? There is no Person almost of Spirit, but will be ready to part with his life as soon as the Honour he holds from the King; and shall not the Ordained Minister maintain the Right which he holds from Christ? When so many eminent Predecessors to these Bishops, and other defenders of this Church have maintained Presbyterian Ordination: When the Reformed Churches abroad have no other: When the Case was such, as that there was no other to be had here in the late times: When not we alone then are concerned only in the wrong, but our Lord and

Master

Master, whose cause is it, and whose business we are to do, and the Souls of so many people: We cannot but appeal to the *Higher Powers* in a matter of so great right and wrong as this is. For we are contented to have revised, and judged, whether the *Diocesan Bishop* be distinguishedly named in Christ's Charter for Ordination, as he is in the Canons of Men: Or when we have been ordained already, as *Timothy*, by the *laying on of the hands of Presbytery*, whether the *Lawn* be *de Essentia* to the Ceremony, and the Hands avail nothing without the *Sleeves* on?

The next thing is the Declaration. *I A. B. do here declare my unfained assent and consent, to all and every thing, contained and prescribed, in and by the Book Entituled, The Book of Common Prayer, and the Form of Ordaining Bishops, Priests and Deacons.* That is, *Assent* to all and every thing contained in, and *Consent* to every thing prescribed by, these Books. Sirs, There was a time, when that the Nation had the hopeful Overture of a Concord between the Sober of two parties, and the Hearts of Most men were in preparation to receive it. But alas! Instead of such a Gracious and Blessed Issue as was expected, we have here the straight Injunction of an *Assent* and *Consent* to all Conformity, and every thing of it, new and old; to be approved and obeyed, or else one part of the Ministry must be immediately turn'd out. How can those now, whose Judgments are, and have been still for Moderation between both Opinions in times before, as now, be able to come over to one side altogether, on such Terms as these? How can these (we say) make so short a turn as this, without the Hazard of some sprain to their Consciences, if they do it? We cannot tell you perhaps, nor are willing to declare the impression, which we have upon our Spirits against a going back from that more Spiritual, Plain, and Simply zealous Service of Almighty God, in the way we were in, and Reformation we sought, unto that *Something* we are not used to, and fear; *To wit*, unto a *form of worship and Discipline*, that carrying a countenance of both, but being rather only a kind of Idols of them, doth seem to us, by the shew, pomp, and complement of the things it contains not, to undermine the *Life*, *Power*, and *Efficacy* of one and the other. We cannot tell you perhaps what hath moved us so much from within, against an ingulphing with this Generation, whether fear of Popery returning on us, or *aliquid arboris*. But we will produce Two or Three

Instances a piece, against *Assent*, and against *Consent* to that which is enjoined, that we may approve our selves to the Consciences of all, as well as our own, in refusing this Declaration.

For our *Assent*. In the *Athanasian Creed* we find this passage, *Which Faith, except every one does keep whole, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly*. One of the Articles of this Creed is this, *The Holy Ghost is of the Father and the Son*. In this Article we know the Greek Church hath differed from the Latin, and held, That the *Holy Ghost* proceeds from the *Father* only. If we give our *Assent* then to every thing or passage contained in this Book, we must believe the Greek Church undoubtedly *Damned*. And what if some of the Non-conformists (as well as of Conformists) do believe it not impossible, but that some *Heathen* may be saved? What if they cannot think otherwise in regard to the Goodness of God, but that whosoever he was, or is, that walk'd or walks up to his Light in sincerity, with a general Repentance for his unseen Errors, must by vertue of the Covenant made with *Adam* fallen, and *Noah*, no less than the *Jews* were by the same confirmed with *Abraham*, be in a state of acceptance with God, conceiving but both alike (for ought they see) were ignorant of their Redemption by the Blood of *Christ*, or the means how their Peace was made with him? Τὸ θεῶν πατρὸς ἡμεῶν καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, ὅτι πάντες ἀνθρώποι, καὶ οἱ πατέρες, πιστεύουσιν ἡμεῖς ἀποκατασταθῆναι. We have shewn before that *Christ* is the first-begotten of God, the Divine Reason, Wisdom, or Word whereof the whole kind of *Adam* or the whole stock of *Mankind* do partake; and whosoever liars according to Reason, are *Christians*, though they be accounted *Heathen*, or without God, such as *Socrates*, *Heraclitus*, and the like. *Iustin Martyr* in his second *Apology* for the *Christians*. We do not say we receive this, nor deny it: We are, though ready to say what was *Luther* saying, *We hope God will be merciful to such a one as Cicerō, but our duty is to abide by the Word*. And yet, cannot this little Candor it self be used, if we must be forced to declare, that whosoever believes not the *Athanasian Creed*, must undoubtedly perish.

Not that other Nonconformists generally make any scruple in this. But what do those sober and learned *Doctors* of the Church think of it, who have a name given them upon this account, that though they hold some things that agree not with her

Arti-

Articles or Homilies; yet they *can* conform to them; or have a Latitude to do it? I *A. B.* do declare my *unfained Assent and Consent* to every thing contained in the *Book of Common Prayer*: and yet I *A. B.* do declare, that I Assent not to that passage in the *Athanasian Creed*. Again, I *A. B.* do profess, that a Heathen may be saved: and yet I do *libenter & ex animo* subscribe to the Article amongst the Thirty-nine, that does pronounce him *Accursed*, who dares hold such an opinion. We are not ignorant indeed, how some would blend the two terms *Assent* and *Consent*, and then interpret them by the words [*to the use*] in the Act: But this is a shift which will not satisfy all persons, and many desire to use no shifts. If these words [*to the use*] had been put into the Declaration it self, it had been better: Yet if they had, *Assent* is proper to the *Truth*, and *Consent* to the *Use*. And yet moreover, how can a man unfainedly consent to the use of any such Particular which is false, and which perhaps he even abhors, that the Wise and Ingenuous of his particular persuasion should think he believed?

Another Instance shall be this: In the Service on the *Gunpowder Treason*, we thank God for preserving the King, and the *Three Estates of the Realm Assembled*. It is a difficult Point now in the Politics of England, Whether the *Three Estates* be, The King, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons: Or the Lords-Spiritual, Temporal, and Commons. The late King made no Scruple in his Answer to the *Nineteen Propositions*, to reckon himself one of the *Three Estates*: Neither was there any we know that durst account the *Three Estates* of the Land to be dissolved, when the Bishops were turned out of the House by an Act. We cannot tell therefore of what Consequence it is to the fundamental liberty, constitution and state of this Kingdom, to yield unto the insinuation of such a thing as this in our Prayers. No man can give his *unfained Assent* to any thing he knows not, and understands not. This is a thing we do not know that the Bishops are indeed one of the *Three Estates* of this Realm. Whether they be or no, we Dispute not; but till we are better satisfied with them and their station, we are afraid that any snare should be laid for the people in the Exercise of their Devotions unto God.

We must mention one Particular more, which is our general Exception. In the new Book, there is inserted several Passages

that make the Bishops a distinct Office and Order from the Presbyter. We need not name the Words, for they are put in more than once *de industria*. They would not be content with a difference in *Degree* and *Eminency*, but they would have us declare to a *Jure Divino* distinction, disproved by Learned Doctors among the *Papists*, and among the Episcopal men, as well as the Reformed Churches. Now we humbly beseech the Parliament to consider, Whether the Bishops have dealt candidly with us, to get such a Condition imposed on the *Presbyterian*, to the keeping of his Ministry, as not only Bishop *Davenant* and *Usher*, but such as Dr. *Field* and *Francis Mason*, must have been turned out for *Nonconformists* upon the same. *There are Two Orders Ecclesiastical, Presbyteri & Diaconi. When we say Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, we name but two Orders, yet three Degrees, Mr. Joseph Mede. Disc. V.*

For our *Consent*. We will name three things likewise (and but name them) more indefinitely. There is the *Hierarchy*, or Bishop, invested with sole power of Ordination, and Jurisdiction. There are the *Ceremonies* in general so often disputed. There is the *Imposition* it self of things not necessary; the occasion of stumbling to many good men, and cause of our Divisions. Two of these things are matters of most Notorious concernment, which would require each of them a Book it self to peruse; but we have no such liberty, and must be content therefore only with the bare Notification. If we give our unfained consent *To all, and every thing prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer, and Form of Ordering Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*, then must we give our approbation (we suppose) to these things amongst others. But if the *Two first* are disputable (which we must desire therefore, to be weighed according to the engagement of mens minds and consciences about these Subjects, and not after our passing short mention of them), we are past doubt in the last, that to impose things that are inductive to others to sin, and yet not necessary, is unlawful. *What Charter hath Christ given to the Church, to bind men up to more than himself hath done*, says *Stillingfleet*, with much more to that purpose, in his Epistle to his *Irenicum*? We will not speak so lazily altogether as he does there: but when we distinguish the *Imposition* and *Submission*, this we are fully perswaded of in Conscience, that though a *Submission* to the things imposed, may perhaps be maintained, the *Imposition* of them is not to be so,
neither

neither by that Doctor, nor by us. *For if we build again the things we have destroyed, we make our selves transgressors.*

It is not (Sirs!) the serving God by a Liturgy, or the reading Common-Prayer in the ordinary daily Service that makes us Nonconformists, though it be this only lyes in the view of the inconsiderate *Many*; and though there are some things we except against the occasional Offices, which by and by may be named. We are sorry if any have given cause for such a scandal, which tends to the breaking of Concord and Charity, which ought to be maintained equally between the brethren of our Private, and of the Parochial Congregations. We should be ready to do any thing we could to the healing this scandal. But there are matters of another moment, which if we had liberty to open to the World at large as our cause requires, we doubt not but that it might come to see, whether we have reason to stick at Conformity, or no. There are few of us who are not sensible in some measure of the Corruption which hath crept into the Church in regard to the Discipline or Government of it by the *Hierarchy* and *Diocesan* Bishops; so much degenerated since *Cyprian's* time from the primitive simplicity: And there hath passed a solemn Oath over the Nation, engaging the main Body of it to the endeavour of a Reformation. Now when the same Government is returned upon the Land with all its former Corruptions, and more heavy Injunctions, if we should generally submit again to it without obtaining any amendment, composition, or abatement, we dread to think on it, with what *faces* they shall be able to stand before God, who have lift up their *hands* to him for things quite contrary in the late Revolutions.

But to proceed: At last, besides the *matter* of this Declaration, The strict prescription as to the *form of words* is more especially to be noted, *That this Declaration be made in these words and no other.* And what if a Minister would read the Book of Common-Prayer without this Declaration? Or what if he would declare to the Contents of the Book in other Expressions? Why should these crooked *SS's* be ram'd down the Throat to Choak any? If we were put to declare in this form of words to any Book we know of this bulk, even to the Bible it self, these are some might stick out.

It is said in the *Kings*, That *Ahaziah* was *Two and Twenty years old* when he began to Reign, and in the *Chronicles*, that he was *Two and Forty*. Let us suppose these two places reconcilable

ble in the *Hebrew*, for our *Assemblies Annotations* hath reconciled them: but both these cannot be true at least in the *English* Translation. If we were put therefore to declare in these words, and no other, *I A. B. Do declare my Assent to every thing contained in our Bible*, we should be gravel'd: For we cannot *Assent* to the Truth of them both in the *English*, nor *Consent* to the Error of the Transcription or Translation; if we think there is no other way (as Mr. *Diodes* says) to reconcile them. In *Psal.* 90. v. 28. our *Psalter* reads the words thus, *And they were not obedient to his Word*; our Bible reads them, *And they rebelled against his Word*. We argue here, One Particular contained in the Book of Common-Prayer, is the Translation of this Text. But if the Translation be true in the *Psalter*, it is false in the Bible; and if it be true in the Bible, it is false in the *Psalter*. That they rebelled, and rebelled not, no man can give his *Assent*. We know indeed how the words may be true in both Translations, as to the minds of the Translators, the one referring them to *Moses* and *Aaron*, and the other to the *Egyptians*: But we urge this more strictly. The mind of the Text it self, of the Holy Ghost, or *David's* mind whose *Palm* it is, was but one: While the Translators then are contrary in their minds, both of them cannot have *David's* mind; and so one of the Translations must have that meaning which is false. And why must we be made then to give our *Consent*, that both these Translations should be used, when the false may be attended by the right?

We mention these little things, among several others, that have bin objected by *Nonconformists* heretofore, to shew the insuperable incumbrance of such continued Injunctions: and there is one like thing more, which none perhaps before us have publickly offered. It is the Rule prescribed us for the finding out the moveable Feasts and Holy days. *Easter-day*, on which the rest depend, is always the first Sunday after the first Full Moon, which happens next after the One and Twentieth day of March. Now examine this Rule for the late year 1674, and you will find the first Full Moon after the One and Twentieth of March was upon the Tenth of April; and consequently if this Rule hold good, the next Sunday, which was April the Twelfth, should have been *Easter-day*: But *Easter-day* was upon the Nineteenth of April, as the Table for Forty years in the Common-Prayer Book does tell you, as well as our Almanacks did. Well! and how then shall we declare our *Assent* and *Consent* to all and every thing contained in this Book? The Table

ble is in the Book, and the Rule is in the Book. If the Rule be true, the Table is false: If the Table be true, the Rule is false. It is a grievous Case, that we must be turned out of our Livings because we cannot give our Assent and Consent to *Both*.

Having mentioned these lesser things then in the way, we shall perhaps be blamed, if we neglect some other, that are of more notice with our brethren, or Moment with us.

In the Preface before the Prayers, we have this injunction, *And all Priests and Deacons are to say daily the Morning and Evening prayer, either privately or openly, not being let by Sickness, or some other Urgent Cause.* We dare not here give our Consent to the use of any thing which we never intend to perform: We do, and shall use at home our own Prayers.

In the other Preface before Ordination, there is this passage with larger words. *And to this intent that these Orders be reverently esteemed, no man shall be accounted, or taken for a Lawful Priest, or be suffered to execute the Function, except he be called according to this form, or hath had formerly Episcopal Ordination.* Let the Reader here who hath any tenderness at his heart, consider whether he can consent to this? Whether he is so assured that the Nation lies under no Guilt, in turning out so many Ministers who were Ordained only by the Presbyters, as that he dares partake in the deed, by his Consent? Our hearts we are sure, will not serve us to do it. We give no Assent or Consent unto this. God give those repentance that do.

In the Office of Baptism, The Parents are not admitted to Covenant for their Children, and how shall the Infant answer *Credo, Abrenuntio*, out of the mouth of the God-father? It is the Parents being in Covenant that gives Title to the Childs Baptism, and unless the Father or Mother make such a profession, as that we can probably judge the one or the other thereby to be in Covenant, we cannot (some of us) admit the Children to Baptism, nor themselves to the Lords Supper.

In the Burial, How shall we be able for our lives to say of every one that dies Un-excommunicate in the Parish, that God of his great Mercy hath taken his Soul unto himself, with such like Expressions? Or that it is certain by Gods Word that every Child Baptized before Actual Sin, is in a state of Salvation? Let our Learned *Gazaker* be consulted, *De Baptismatis Infantibus* &c. *Efficacia*, and then judge of it who will.

In the Rubrick to these Offices before mentioned, and to the Communion, if we Consent to every thing prescribed, or to the use of every thing there prescribed, we must not deliver the Bread and Wine to a man if he Scruple to Kneel at the Sacrament: We must turn away his Child from Baptisme, if he Scruples God-Fathers: And if the Child dyes before it is Christned (though the Parents be our dear Friends) we must not allow it Christian Burial. We do not Consent to these things, and the shift before of these words [*To the use*] will not help us.

In the Service for the Holy-days, There are the most of us not agreed upon the Lawfulness of such days. *Six days shalt thou labour.* But above all the rest, there is one thing in S. Clements day prescribed by the new Common-Prayer Book, that we wonder how those themselves that put it in can give their Consent to it, which is, the Change of a profitable Chapter in *Esay*, for the Story (God defend us!) of *Ball and the Dragon?*

There is lastly the use of the *Cross*, a compleat Institution of it self, brought in or added to the Ordinance of Christ, and appearing to be of the same nature and end. This, we doubt, doth entrench upon his Kingly Office, and must humbly therefore offer one reason for the removal, which we sollicite, whatsoever be done in other matters. *The Ceremonies in use amongst us* (says Mr. Hooker) *are retained in no other respect saving only for that to retain them is to our seeming good and profitable.* To which purpose, *We are content with these only* (says the Common Prayer Book) *as be apt to stir up the dull mind of Man to remembrance of his duty, by some edifying signification.* But the *Cross* being a Ceremony applied to Children who are incapable of having their minds stirred up by any thing signified thereby, it is manifestly retained without their profit. We will enforce the Argument. By the same reason as we retain the *Cross* in Baptism, the other Ceremonies in Popery which are left may be readmitted. As we use the *Cross* to signifie that the Child must fight manfully under Christ's Banner, we may use the *Chrism* wherein that *Cross* was used to be made, to signifie the Christians anointing to the Combat, and for forward. There is nothing can be replied hereto in good earnest but that it is true if the Church pleased to enjoyn it, so we might. We urge consequently, By the same reason as the Church hath relinquishd the *Chrism* in Baptism, it may leave the *Cross* also, that is only if it please so to vote in a needful Convocation.

vocation. And that it should do so, there is cause enough, if there were nothing else, to be said but this only, that as for all other Ceremonies enjoyned, the Conformist may plead, that they are but *Circumstances of Worship*, wherein the Church hath proper Authority to appoint what is decent and orderly: But for any solemn intire Right, which is no *Circumstance* of the Ordinance unto which it is appended; or any ways *in genere necessary* thereunto, if this also be enjoyned, we shall have no bottom or banks set to the Appointment of Ceremonies, how far the Sea shall go, and no farther than so.

We will heap up no more Matters of this kind, for they are infinite; and it is some Relief to our Thoughts, that the last Long Parliament it self (we thank God) did come to be a little sensible of it, in so much as they were near content one Session, to Cassure this Declaration quite. There does remain now therefore the Subscription in the Act, and this Question which does arise upon it: whether there be not as good reason, in regard to the most sober Consciences, to take away this *Subscription in the Act of Uniformity*, and the *Oath in the Oxford-Act*, as well as the *Declaration of Assent and Consent*?

The *Subscription* is this: *I A. B. do declare, That it is not Lawful upon any Pretence whatsoever, to take Arms against the King. And that I do abhor that Traiterous Position of taking Arms by his Authority, against his Person, or those Commissionated by him: And that I will conform to the Liturgy of the Church of England, as it is now by Law establish'd. And I do declare, That I do hold there lyes no Obligation upon me, or any other Person, from the Oath commonly called the Solemn League and Covenant, to endeavour any Change or Alteration of Government either in Church or State: and that the same was in it self an Unlawful Oath, and imposed upon the Subjects of the Realm, against the known Laws and Liberties of this Kingdom.* The *Oath* this: *I A. B. do swear, That it is not Lawful upon any Pretence whatsoever, to take Arms against the King. And that I abhor that Traiterous Position of taking Arms by his Authority, against his Person, or against those that are Commissionated by him, in pursuance of such Commissions. And that I will not at any time, endeavour any Alteration of Government either in Church or State.*

In this *Oath* and *Subscription*, we have the *Matter*, and the *Form* of Words; that is, the *Substance*, and the *Composure*. The one whereof, are the other in both, and lyable to the ensuing Excep-

ons. Which we desire may be taken with Candor, in respect only to our Design, that is as *Argumentative* for the Removal of these Injunctions: not as peremptorily *Definitive* of our own Judgments, and much less of others above our Sphear, in all the Cases contained in them.

To begin with the *Oath*. Here are three parts of it. The first part appears not (for we speak it humbly only, and argumentatively) consistent with *Judgment*; the second with *Truth*; nor the third with *Righteousness*.

We will take up the last part first: *And I will not endeavour any Alteration of Government*. There is no Government on Earth so perfect, that it hath need of Laws like the *Modes* and *Persians*. Government may be considered in the *Administration*: or the *Constitution*. The word *Government* here, is set down indefinitely, without Distinction. Alteration of Laws, and so Government in the Administration, is as necessary many times upon emergent Occasions to the *Body Politick*, as the fresh Air is to the *Natural*. This *Oath* was brought into the House, to have been made Common. It were not a thing righteous, to have had that Engagement laid on Persons in such a Capacity: It is not righteous, to have it laid on any that are Free-Holders, and Free-Subjects, as we are. The Constitution of our Nation, as Parliamentary, is such, that no Law can be *Establish'd* or *Repealed*, but it must pass the House of Commons; and so the whole Body concur in their Representatives to every Alteration of Government, (or in the Government) that is made, if it be Legal: And no House of Commons are Chosen, but by the People. Every English-man is intended to be here present, either in Person, or by Procuration; and the Consent of the Parliament is taken to be every Man's Consent, says Sir Thomas Smith, *De Rep. Angl.* l. 2. c. 2. *Nay, while the King, consilio & assensu Baronum leges olim imposuit universo Regno, by the Counsel and Assent of his Barons, did give Laws to his whole Realm, consentire inferior quisq; vixit in persona Domini sui Capitalis prout hodie per procuratores Comitatus, every Inferior seemed to consent in the Person of his Chief Lord, as now they do by their Burgeses and Knights of the Shires, says Sir Henry Spelman.* This is so true, that in this Sense it is, that the Laws are said to be, *Quas vulgus elegerit*; Which the People shall choose. Now then, if every Subject hath a Fundamental Liberty to choose Knights and Burgeses, and accordingly to inform them of their Grievances, and petition them for Redress; and

in them, as their Representatives, do consent to the Alteration of Government and Laws (if there be any pass) as profitable to the Nation: how can such an Oath be imposed on him, *That he will not endeavour any Alteration*, as this? Is not choosing Burgesses, informing them, petitioning them, acting and legally consenting in them to that end, *An endeavour*? and that as much as can be in their Place and Calling? And no more than Endeavour *in their Place and Calling*, was Challenged by any. It is true, that *new* Laws may be made; and *Old repealed*, without alteration of the *Constitution*: but not without *Alteration of Government*; because Government takes in both the *Administration*, and the *Constitution*. Let us suppose therefore the word *Government* confined only to the *Constitution*. There is the *Constitution* of the Government in the *State*, which is a *Legal Monarchy*; and this indeed we are so far bound from endeavouring to alter, as we think it is not alterable by the *King* himself, and *Parliament*; because the Supream Power for the *Administration* must be supposed in all Communities, to be derived from, and held by the *Constitution*. But as for Government in the *Church*, we are to know and acknowledge, that the *Constitution* hereof it self, is but a Law of the *Administration*, in reference to the *State*. And consequently, when all Laws for the *Administration* are liable to the Regulation of *Parliaments*, the great Question will remain, How those Men who are Presbyterian or Independent in their Judgment, and think *Episcopacy* against the Scripture, can be abridged the *Endeavour* only afore-mentioned, (which consists but in choosing Representatives, and doing no more than the *Constitution* allows) in order to the Prosecution of what they think themselves obliged to in Conscience, both by *Oath*, and the word of God? Is not the foundation Liberty of the whole People, and our selves with them here in danger? Judge ye that are Wise. And what an Anointed Plot have we had here on the Nation, that an *Allegiance* in effect should be sworn to the *Bishops*, as well as to the *King*, by such Impositions?

For the *Words* then, (or *Form*) we wonder at this Rigour in the Compiler, That a Man must swear, not to endeavour *any* Alteration. Had it not been enough to be engaged, not to endeavour the Alteration of the *Substance* of our Government, *Episcopacy* in the *Church*, and *Monarchy* in the *State*, but it must be *not any* Alteration? It were well we were so absolutely Perfect. And again, must they not at *any time* endeavour any Alteration? What if Times should turn,

and we be in a Confusion as we were, or any the like Chance or Change come? Must these Men be bound up, that they cannot endeavour to reduce back this Government that we have? No, not the King and Bishops, if the Iniquity of the Times should put them out; for they have sworn, they will not at *any time endeavour any Alteration in Church or State.* Sirs! The Matter of this Obligation being against the Fundamental Freedom of the Subject and Parliament, and the *Words* you see so ensnaring, and that against the Duty all owe to the Publick Good: we offer it to you to consider in the first place, whether this *last part* be according to *Righteousness.*

For the *middle* of the Oath. Here is a *Position* of taking Arms by the Kings authority against any Commissioned by him, which must be sworn to, as *abhor'd and traitorous.* There is now a Case in the mouths of all the understanding Refusers of the Oath and Subscription. Suppose some *Writ* sued out, and comes to the Sheriff's hands, and suppose some to oppose the Execution by the Kings Personal Command or Commission, and he thereupon raises the *posse Comitatus* upon them. We will ask here, whether the Sheriff acts not herein by the Kings Authority? We think it cannot be denied. *By the Kings Authority is all one as by the Law.* And when he can act so against any for all their Commission and the Law will bear him out, how is this *position* in this case *traitorous*, and to be *abhor'd*? For our parts we do resolutely believe that it was not ever the intent of the Parliament in this Oath, the Subscription (as to the Major part we may be bold to advance the personal will or Commission of the King above Law, which were to make his power Despotical, and not Royal. *Non est Rex (says Bracton) ubi dominatur voluntas, non Lex He is no King that Governs by his will, and not by the Law.* And how this *position* indefinitely (without exception of this Case at least) must be sworn to as altogether Traiterous, we are to learn. What if any should come with a Commission under the Seal, to raise Money without an Act of Parliament and by virtue of such Commission shall seize our Goods, rife our Houses and Ravish our Wives? May not the People, or our inferior Magistrates, or the Sheriff for the County, withstand such violence? May not the Constable alone by a Warrant from the Justice to keep the Peace, raise the Neighbour-hood, and do it? If he may, or the Sheriff may, it must be in the Name of the King, or by Authority of the Law; and then is there some Case

Cafe or Cafes where Arms or Force may be raifed by the Authority of the King againft fuch as are Committed by him, though never againft his own Sacred Perfon. Suppose again, that Papifts or Fanaticks, fhould either by Power or Suprife, at any time get the King into their hands, (as the Duke of *Guife* once dealt with the *French* King) and prevail with him for fear of his life to grant Commissions under his Hand and Seal destructive to the Church and State, muft the Nation be remedilefs in this Cafe, and fo the King and Kingdom ruin'd by thefe Commissions? Nay, what fecurity hath the Nation, that a Lord Keeper may not prove Traitor to his King, and Countrey; If we may fuppofe fuch a thing poffible, what if fuch a Lord Keeper fhould under the Broad Seal grant Commissions to difband his Majesties Life-Guard, deliver up the Navy or Sea Port Towns, feize the *Tower* or places of ftrengh; in what a condition were the King and Kingdom brought, if the Subjects hands be bound up by an Oath not to refift or take Arms, againft the Execution of fuch Commissions: Suppose but fo long as till they underftand his defign, for by that time, the whole Nation may be paft recovery? We are offended at the fenfe, and ftand amaze at the Horror of thofe fad Confequences, into which the Impofition of fuch like *Tests*, or Injunctions as thefe, (if not timely retrenched) may lead our Pofterity. *The Courts of Law cannot avoid the Kings Charters or Commissions, which are paffed againft Law. For the King is fubject to the Law, and fworn to maintain it.* Judge *Jenkens* in his Works, p. 48.

As for the *Form* then of the *Words*, I abhor this *Traiterous* *Position*, They are harfh. The word *Abhor* efppecially, is a word of Interelt and Paflion, A cooler word, as *I difown* or *difallow*, might have ferved. Some of the moft Grave (as *Calamy* particularly) were much offended at that word. A man may fay a thing is unlawful in his Confcience, when he cannot fay according to the Truth, *I Abhor it.* There is never a Gentleman in the Land, but may fwear truly, That he believes it unlawful to company with any other Woman as his own Wife: but if each one was put to fwear, he *Abhors it*, we fuppofe, fome Sons of the Church would be willing to be Non-conformifts to fuch an Oath. Well Sirs! when thefe words *Abhor*, and *Traiterous*, are fo harfh in the *Compoſure*, and when fuch Cafes as above-mentioned, may be put as to the *Position* in the *Matter* of it, wherein it feems juftifiable, and without offence: We offer it in the next place to confideration, whether this *middle part* of the Oath and Subſcription be according to *Truth*. For

For the first part, We have a large Assertion roundly sworn. The Oath and Subscription runs not only, that it is not lawful to take Arms against the King, or that it is not lawful on any pretence, but on any pretence (or cause) whatsoever. The Grammatical literal construction of that word seems to intimate no less, than that this Proposition must be held without restraint or limitation. Amongst the most eminent of Authors which have wrote of the Power of Princes, and establish'd it against Resistance in their writings on this Subject, we suppose there are few or none to be valued above these Three, *Barclay, Grotius, Arnisæus*. And we shall find, that they have all their restrictions or cases of Exceptions in the maintenance of this Tenet. And how shall any be over earnest here in punishing the Refuser, when if the matter be well scan'd, the reason perhaps, why he refuses, will be found only because he hath read more than some others that yield their submission. We begin with *Barclay*, that is *William Barclay*, a Scot and Councillor to the French King, who writes against *Buchanan, Boucher*, and other Monarchomachists, as he calls them. This learned man endeavours to make his Prince to be above the whole People, that consequently no Arms can be taken against him: Nevertheless, when he comes to put some pressing Cases, he thus limits him. *Quid ergo? nulli ne Casus incidere possunt, quibus populo in Regem arma capere iure suo liceat? nulli certe quamdiu Rex manet. What then? Can there be no Cases happen, wherein it is lawful for the people to take Arms against the King by Right? None certainly so long as he remains a King.* There are Cases indeed he accounts in which a King doth *Exuere personam Regis, or Dominatam se exuere*. Put off the Person of a King. And particularly (l. 3. c. 16.) he mentions two. *Si regnum alienet: si Republicanam evertere conatur.* If he go to alienate his Kingdom: if he go to overthrow the Commonwealth. We cannot tell how to approve this Doctrine, the Papists use the same well know in another Case. We may not fight against our King, but if the Pope Excommunicate him, he shall be no King with them. Let us come to *Grotius*, and first quote him in his Judgment of *Barclay*, lest you may think else we mistake him. *Barclay* (says he) *Regis imperii licet assertor fortissimus, hic tamen descendit in populo & insigni eius parti suo concedit se tuendi adversus inhumanum seotium.* *Barclay*, though the most strong assertor of Kings Government, descends to this, that he grants a Right to the People, or the most eminent part of them, of defending themselves against intolerable oppression.

fun. For himself then after he hath asserted this Tenet, *Summum imperium tenentibus jure resisti non posse*, That the highest Power may not lawfully be resisted, from Scripture, Antiquity, Authority, and Example, to as much purpose perhaps as any, he descends to put seven Cases, wherein he does *Lectorem monere*, Warn his Reader, *ne putet in hanc legem delinquere eos qui revera non delinquant*, lest he mistake some for delinquents that are not. For *Arussem*, he hath wrote Three learned Books of Politicks. *De Jure Majestatis*. *De Doctrina Politica*. *De Auctoritate principum in populum semper Inviolabili*, seu, quod nulla ex causa subditi fas sit contra legitimum principem arma sumere. That the Authority of Princes over the People, ought to be inviolable, or that it is lawful for no cause to take up Arms against our lawful Prince. Here then we have our Tenet, in the state whereof he comes in the issue to distinguish between *Rex* and *Tyrannus*, a King and a Tyrant; *Tyrannus in Titulo*, & *Tyrannus in Exercitio*. A Tyrant in Title, and in Practice: And *Tyrannus in Exercitio*, A Tyrant in Practice, he accounts does *Excidere de Jure, esse Hereditaria*, Fall from his Right, though Hereditary. *Traditum Respublica Principi in eum finem* (says he) *ut illi praeiis salutem omnium, a quo si prorsus deservent, etiam de potestate eadem, quam non alio sine sibi commissam habebat*. The Common-wealth is delivered to the Prince, that he should rule over it for the common safety; from which if he depart altogether, he falls even from the Power it self, which was committed to him only for this end. We do not give our consent to, nor pass our censure upon the words we cite: But by such Testimonies as these, without naming others, we would convince those persons who were the Compilers of these Declarations to be subscribed, or sworn, with some relentment and shame, that when the Temperate sense and meaning of them is such as we were not like to boggle at, they should be yet composed so in terminis, as to be obnoxious to no grand Exception.

For the form then yet of the Words. *I A B do swear that it is not lawful*, &c. Here is an Oath to the matter of a Proposition questioned, to the determination of a Point of Conscience, and that diversly decided. An Oath should be to a matter of Fact, and cannot be taken but to that whereof we are certain. To require of Man therefore to swear to the verity of a Doctrine, is not according to Judgment, being a thing impossible, because no Man is infallible. Now then Sirs! When here is such an Erratum in the Compoture, as the want of the words *I believe*, or the like

like, *I swear that I hold, or believe, that it is not lawful, &c.* and so material an Exception, as the Judgment of the most learned in general comes to, against the Substance in *Terminis*, of the first part of this Oath, which yet goes down ordinarily without Chewing: we humbly offer it in the third place to be considered how this Oath can be taken either in *Truth* or *Judgment*.

An Oath must be taken in Judgment, in Truth, and in Righteousness. The first part (we argue) is not according to Judgment; The second not according to Truth; The third not according to Righteousness. We speak it humbly by way only of Argumentation (as we have said) craving pardon if it offend, for the manner of the Expression.

We proceed to the *Subscription* conjoyned, which hath we count Two Parts. The one is the purport wholly of the Oath; whereof therefore we shall add no more but this, That when the matter of the one, and the other in the former part, is such as enters the foundation of Politicks in general, and the Laws and State of the Land in particular (which is *Bonorum regum, a Kingdom regulated by Laws*, as Sir Thomas Smith hath it; *Rex sub Deo & Lege, The King is under God and the Law*, says Hooker and Bracton) so that it requires the skill of the greatest Judges, Serjeants and Sages of the Law to determine the Cases included in it, it is a very hard thing we think, that every poor silly Minister is put to decide the same for himself, and to have that evidence therein, as to be able to take his Oath, or give his Hand to the certainty of it. The other part of the Subscription concerns the *Covenant*, and here the words [*nor any other*] to name none else, are such a *Ford*, that (as to the Conscience of all not thoroughly Episcopal) so far as we see, is unpassable. It is nothing to some of our selves to subscribe, *there lies no obligation on me from the Covenant to endeavour any alteration of Government*; because we never took it, it was against our Consciences, and we can conceive for others in a *Private capacity*, what have they to do with Government? No Oath can bind to sedition and disobedience. But as for such as are in a *Publick capacity*, and can act lawfully towards *Reformation* in their place, what shall we say to those? One way there is indeed, will strike off all quite, and that is to hold the present Government established to be *jure Divino* altogether, so that any alteration is sin. He that holds thus, may affirm clearly, that though a Man swore he would endeavour to alter the Government, it binds him nothing, let him be

in what capacity he will, the least alteration is unlawful, and he must therefore repent of his Oath, and not perform it. But if a Man hold, that the Presbyterian Government is rather *Jure Divino*, or that neither Episcopal nor Presbyterian is *Jure Divino*, or that Episcopal Government is well, yet that *ours* as it is now, is not altogether so well, but that something may be alter'd for the better: We would fain be informed how such a Man can absolve him who is in a publick capacity (as a Parliament Man) from his endeavouring so much according to time and prudence, if he hath sworn before that he will. It is in vain to hide where the water sticks. There are some cannot tell how to absolve *One* other for their lives. They say not there lyes an Obligation upon any to do as they have sworn, for fear it be dangerous; and they dare not say there lyes none, for fear of their Consciences, or for fear of God. As to *our* selves, This we may say, that we desire to be instructed, and this we will say, that it is an hard thing to be put on it to say, that there lyes no Obligation upon any other but our selves, whether there does or no. We will therefore close up our Reasons for Non-conformity, with this one Note only. If there be so many difficulties in *One* of the things alone, which is required to Conformity, what a *River* hath he to *wade*, that must pass through *All* together that belongs to it?

We descend to some Proposals for concord or mutual quiet to the Nation, under the Differences which is the last part of our undertaking. *Secunda Cogitationes prudentius & moderatius consilium; & prudentius quia moderatius.*

It hath pleased His Majesty by several gracious overtures to commend an Union of his Protestant Subjects to the consideration of Parliament. A Design full of all Princely Wisdom, Honesty, and Goodness. In this Achievement there is a double Interest (we apprehend) to be distinguish'd and weigh'd, that of *Religion* it self, and that of the *Nation*. The *Advance* of *Religion* does consist much in the Unity of its Professors both in Opinion and Practise to be of one Mind; and one Heart, and one Way (in Discipline and Worship) so far as may be according to the Scriptures. The *Advance* of the *Nation*, doth lye in the Freedom and Flourishing of Trade; and uniting the whole Body in the Common Benefit and dependance on the Government. The one of these bespeaks an *Establish'd order* and *Accommodation*; the other bespeaks *Indulgence*,
D
Liberty

Liberty of Conscience, or Toleration: for while people are in danger about Religion, we dare not launch out into Trade, (say they) but keep out Moneys, seeing we know not into what Straights we shall be driven; and when in reference to their party, they are held under severity, it is easie to those who are designing Heads, to mould them into Wrath and Faction; which without occasion will melt and dissolve it self into bare dissent of Opinion, peaceably rejoycing under the enjoyment of Protection.

The King we know is concerned as *Supream Governour*, and as a *Christian Protestant Governour*. As he is *King*, he is to seek the welfare of the Nation: as he is a *Christian*, the flourishing of Religion, and the Protestant Religion, particularly is his Interest, as this Kingdom doth lye in Balance (he being the chief Party) with its Neighbour Nations.

The Judgment now of some is for a *Comprehending Act*, which may take in those who are for our Parochial Churches, that severity then might be used for reclaiming all whosoever separate from them: The Judgment of some others is for a free and equal Act of Grace to all indifferently, (the Papists with most excepted) whether separatists or others abhorring *Comprehension*, as more dangerous to them on that account mentioned, than all the Acts that have passed. Neither of these Judge up to the full Interest of the King and Kingdom as is proposed. It becomes not the *Presbyterian*, if his Principles will admit him to own our Parochial Church, and enjoy a Living, to be willing to have his Brethren the *Independants* given up to persecution: And it becomes not the *Separatist*, if he may but enjoy his Conscience, to repine or envy at the *Presbyterian* for reaping any further Emolument, seeing both of them (supposing the latter may do so) have as much at bottom as can be, in their capacities, desired of either. It is an Act therefore of a mixt Complexion, providing both *Comprehension* and *Indulgence* for the different Parties, must serve our purpose.

And to this end (as we may humbly hope) was there once a Bill in Parliament, *A Bill for the ease of the Protestant Dissenters in the Business of Religion*. Which that it may (some time or other) be cast into this model, we must present the same desires, under a little further Explication.

There are two sorts (we all know) of these Protestant Dissenters: One that own the established Ministry, and our Parish Congregations,

gregations, and are in capacity of Union upon that account, desiring it heartily upon condescension to them in some smaller matters; The *other* that own not our Churches, and so are incapable of a Conjunction, who do not, and cannot desire it, or seek it.

For the *one*. That which we propose is a further latitude in the present constituted order, that such may be received; and this we call *Comprehension* or *Accommodation*. Let us suppose that nothing else were required of a Man to be a Minister of a Parish, than there is to the Parishioner, to be a Member of the Parish Church, as part of the National. If a person Baptized will come to Church, and hear Common-Prayer, and receive the Sacrament, and does nothing worthy of Excommunication, he is, he may, he must be received for a Parochial Member: In like manner if a Minister first Ordained (and so *Episcopally* or *Classically* approved in his Abilities for that Function) will but read the Book of Liturgy, and Administer the Sacraments according to it, and does nothing which deserves suspension (we appeal to all indifferently sober) why should not this suffice a Man for the enjoying his Living, and exercising the Office unto which he is called? And what if some little omission here and there to save a Scrupulous Conscience (so long as the main Body of the Service be still read) were tolerated, would it do hurt to any?

For the *other*, there is indeed nothing that can be done to bring those in, and joyn them with us in Parochial Union. Yet is there this to be proposed, that you *bear* with them, and let not any be persecuted merely for their Consciences, and that we call *Indulgence* or *Toleration*. If the *Presbyterian* now may be *Comprehended*, he will be satisfied to act in his Ministry without endeavouring any *Alteration*, of *Episcopacy* otherwise. If the *Congregationalist* be *Indulged*, he will be satisfied, though he be not *Comprehended*, for that he cannot submit unto; and so shall there be no disobligation put on any, but all pleased, and enjoy the *ease* of such a *Bill*. Let but the Grounds of *Comprehension* be laid wide enough to take in all who can own and come unto the publick Liturgy, (the Conformist then we may suppose well the greater weight of the Nation) and when the Countenance of Authority, and all State Emoluments are cast into one Scale, and others let alone till their mind serves them, without Persecution to *inflame* them, or Preference to *encourage* them, (especially if one Expedient be used which

shall not pass unmentioned in the close, that such as come in, may find it really better to them to be a Priest to a Tribe, than a Levite to a Family) we need not doubt but Time, the Mistress of the wise and unwise, will discover the peaceable Issue of such Counsels.

And here let us pause a little; for we imagine we see what *Itaciles* are hanging on the *Eves* of the Parliament House at this motion: What Prejudices and Impressions we mean have been laid on some Members by former Acts. There was a Speech delivered by the then Chancellor in *Christs-Church-Hall* in *Oxford*, to the Parliament there, and the Schollars assembled, wherein the Glory of contriving the *Oxford Oath*, and consequently of the like former Impositions, was most Magnificently, as well as Spitefully enough Arrogated to its proper Author. It was, it seems, the designed Policy of that Great Man, to root those Principles out of Mens minds, upon which the late Wars (as he supposed) were built; and he would do it by this Invention, to wit, the imposing upon them new *Declarations*, *Oaths*, *Subscriptions*, of a Strain framed contrary to those Principles. We do remember now the Sentence of *Esdra*s to the *Apologue* of the Angel, where the *Woods* and *Seas* would encounter one another. *Verily* (says he) *it was a foolish purpose*. For the Trees could not come down from the Hills, nor the Waves get up from the Shoars. We must say the same of this Policy. It was really a great vanity to think that Folks should be made to swear away their thoughts and beliefs: Whatsoever it is we think, or believe, we do think it, we do believe it, we must believe it, notwithstanding any of these outward Impositions. The Honest Man indeed will refuse an Injunction against his Conscience, the Knave will swallow it, but each retain their *Principles*, which the last will be likeliest to put into any villanous *practise*. On the contrary, there is nothing could be advised more certain, to keep the Covenant; and such Principles alive in Mens Hearts and Memories, than this perpetual enjoying the *Renuntiation* of it. Nor may you wonder, if that Lesson sink deep into Mens flesh, which you will teach them with *Briars* and *Thorns*, as *Gideon* taught the *Men of Succoth*. Besides, it is the most unpolitick thing that ever could have been, for such Contents as are of that dangerous Consequence to Majesty and the Government, to have them once dispoised or brought into question, to be put into these *Declarations*, *Oaths*, and *Subscriptions*, which necessitates the Examination of them to so many. It was

was the wisdom of the antient Church instead of contention about the Jewish Ceremonies, to take care they might have an Honourable Burial: And we dare say, if that Great Lord Chancellour had but put off his Cap to the Covenant, and bidden it a fair adieu only, he should have done more towards its Extirpation, than by all this iterated trouble to Mens Consciences. And if it shall therefore please the succeeding Ministers of State instead of going to root out the Principles of Innovation which are got into people, by this means (which is no means to do it, but the means to rivet them more into us,) to endeavour rather to root out the *Cause* from us, which make Men willing to entertain such Principles, and desire change: we suppose their Policy will prove the sounder. The way to establish the Throne of the King is this, to make it appear, that all those *Grievances*, and all those *Good things* which the people in the late times expected to be removed, or to be obtained by a *Common-wealth*, or a change of the Government, may be more effectually accomplish'd by a King in the Acts of His Parliament.

We are sensible how our Theam rises upon us, and that we begin to shoot wide. We take our Aim therefore again, and two things in earnest we would expect from such a *Bill*, as the sum of what is necessary to the end of it proposed, our *Ease*, if it be made to serve the turn. The one is, that Bishop *Laud* be confined to his Cathedral; and the other, that Chancellor *Hyde* be totally expelled our Acts of Parliament. By the first we mean, that the Ceremonies in the ordinary Parish Churches be left to the liberty of the Minister, to use, or use them not according to his Conscience and Prudence towards his own Congregation: And by the latter; that all these new devised *Oaths*, *Subscriptions* and *Declarations*, together with the *Canonical Oath*, and the *Subscription in the Canons*, be suspended for the time to come. If that be too much, we shall content our selves with a milder motion, that whatsoever these Declarations be that are required to be made, subscribed, or sworn, they may be imposed only as to the *Matter* and *End*, leaving the taker but free to the use of their own *Expressions*. And this expedient we gather from the Lord *Coke*, who hath providently as it were against such a season laid in this Observation. *The Form of the Subscription set down in the Canons, ratified by King James, was not expressed in the Act of the thirteenth of Elizabeth. Inst. part. 4. c. 74.* And consequently, if the Clergy enjoyed this freedom until then,

then, in reference to the Particulars therein contained, what hinders why they might not have the same restored in reference also to others?

It is true, that it may seem hard to many in this Parliament; to undo any thing themselves have done in a former: But though this be no *rule* for *Christians*, who are sometimes to *repent* as well as to *believe*, if they be loath to *Repeat* any thing, what if they shall only *Interpret* or *Explain*? Let us suppose then some clause in this *Bill*, or some new Act, for *Explanations*. If any Non-conformist cannot come up to the full meaning and intent of these injunctions rightly explained, let him remain in *statu quo*, under the state only of *Indulgence*, without benefit of *Comprehension*, for so long as those who are not *Compr-hended*, may yet enjoy that *ease* as to be *Indulged* in some equal measure answerable to His Majesty's *Declaration* that was, whether *Comprehension* be large or narrow, such terms as we obtain are pure advantage, and such as we obtain not, are no loss. But if any does, and can honestly agree to that whole sense which the Parliament intends in such impositions, why should there be any obstruction for such a Man, though he deliver himself in his own words, to be received into the Establish'd order with others, unless Men will look on these Injunctions only to be contriv'd for *Engines of Battery* to destroy the Non-conformists, and not as *Instruments of Unity* to edifice the Church of God?

We will not leave our *Congregational Brethren* neither, so long as we have something more that may be said for them, not ordinarily considered by any. It is this, That though indeed, they are not, and cannot seek to be of our Churches as they are *Parochial* under the *Dioecess* or *Super-intendency* of the Bishops: Yet do they not refuse, but seek to be comprehended within the Church, as *National* under His Majesty. We will explain our selves. The Church may be considered as *Universal*, and so Christ alone is the Head of it, and we receive our Laws from him: Or as *Particular*, and so the Pastors are Heads, Guides, or Bishops over their respective Flocks, who are commanded therefore to *obey them in the Lord*: Or as *National*, which is an accidental and external respect to the Church of God, wherein the King is to be acknowledged the Supreme Head of it, and as we judge no otherwise; For thus also runs the Statute, *That our Sovereign Lord shall be taken and reputed the only Supreme Head in Earth*

Earth of the Church of England; called Ecclesia Anglicana. Now if it should please the King and Parliament to allow and approve those *separate Meetings, and stated places for Worship by a Law, as His Majesty did by His Declaration,* we must profess that, as such Assemblies by this means must be constituted immediately *Integral parts* of the Church as National, no less than our Parish Congregations: So would the Congregate Churches (at least those that understand themselves) own the King for Head over them, in the same sense as we own him Head over ours, that is as much as to say, for the Supreme *Governing* Governour of all, (in this accidental regard) both to keep every several Congregation to that Gospel order themselves profess; and to supervise their Constitutions in things indifferent, that nothing be done but in subordination to the Peace of the Kingdom.

Well, let us suppose then a liberty for these separate Assemblies under the visitation of His Majesty and His Justices, and not the Bishops, or under them as his substitutes (that is exercising an Authority, *formally* secular, and *objectively* only Ecclesiastical) and no otherwise. We would fain know what were the evil you can find in them. If it lie in any thing, it must be in that you call Schisme. Separation then let us know in it self simply, considered is nothing, neither good nor evil. There may be reason to divide or separate some Christians from others out of prudence, as the *Catechumens* of old from the *fully instructed*, for their greater edification; and as a Chappel or two is added to a parish Church, When the people else were too big a Congregation. It is not all *division* then or *separation* is Schism, but *useful division*. Now the Supreme Authority as National Head having appointed the Parochial Meetings, and required all the Subjects of the Land to frequent them, and them alone, for the acknowledging, glorifying, or National serving and worshipping the one only true God, and His Son, whom we have generally received, and this Worship or Service in the nature of it being intrinsically good, and the External order (such as that of Time and Place) and the like-Circumstances) being properly under his Jurisdiction, it hath seemed to us hitherto, that unless there was something in that order and way prescribed, which is sinful, and that required too as a Condition of that Communion, there is no man could refuse his attendance universally on these Parochial Assemblies, without the sin of disobedience: And consequently his separation there-

by

by becoming sinful, proves Schism: But if the Scene be alter'd, and those separate Assemblies made legal, the Schism in reference to the National Church upon the same account does vanish: Schism is a separation from that Church, whereof we *ought*, or are *bound* to be Members: If the Supreme Authority then loose our obligation to the Parish Meeting, so that we are bound no longer; the *iniquity*, (we say upon this account) *is not to be found*, and the Schism gone. Lo here, a way opened for the Parliament (if they please) to rid the trouble and scruple of Schism (at once) out of the Land. If they please not, yet is there something to be thought on for the Separatist in a way of *Forbearance*; that the innocent Christian, at least, as it was in the time of *Trajan*, may not be *saught out unto punishment*. Especially when such a Tolleration only is desired, as is consistent with the *Articles of Faith* (i. e. the Creed) a *Good life*, and the *Government of the Nation*.

But what shall we say then to the Papists, which is the Objection hit still in their Teeth that plead for Moderation? Why, we will not baulk the delivery of our opinion. There are Two parts we profess of that favour or condescension we seek from the Higher Powers: The one consisting of a *Compassion* with those whose Principles are fit and capable of it: And the other consisting of *Forbearance* towards those whose Principles will allow them no more. The *Papist* is one whose worship to us is Idolatry, and we cannot therefore allow them the liberty of publick Assembling themselves, as others of the Separation. It is true, we have moreover Laws very severe against the Jesuit, and Seminary Priest: which we may suppose to be upon the ground of State Interest. The Supremacy of the Pope, and the Authority of the King are inconsistent in this Land: The Priest and Jesuit are taken by Law as Factors for the Pope; and an undermining the Government in all States is a Capital Crime. But as for the common *Papist*, who lives innocently in his way, he is to us in regard to what he does in private, in the *Manner of his God*, as others who refuse likewise to come to Common Prayer. He may not expect to have power or trust, being of a Religion so dangerous to the State, but he may hope for the enjoyment of his Conscience as we, without wrong or oppression. And indeed if it be only Liberty of Conscience that he seeks, this will be sufficient, that he is not troubled, nor we. If he desires more, he stirs us all

all-presently into Jealousie, and no wonder if we be very solicitous to have Popery kept out of *Damnation*, or our selves from Fire and Eggot, how gentle and equal soever we be to it, and to all parties alike under a safe *Subjugation*. For as the *Roman* Catholick we suppose will consider from hence-forward, that to go to bring in a Religion up in a people that are no more prepared for theirs than we are in this Nation, is the committing of a Rape upon the publick Conscience, and Possession being got without our good wills, would not likely be long retained: So are we to remember the common rule of Christianity towards them; that we must do as we would be done by to all Men: and that, *With what measure we mete to others, it shall be met to us again*.

And now we turn us to the Houses. My Lords and Gentlemen! We suppose you honest Persons that would not depart from this Catholick Rule, that would not wrong any; and if you did, would make them recompence. There have been very hard Acts passed, which when the Bills were brought in, might haply look smooth and fair, to some of you who were Members: But you saw not the Covert Art, secret Machination, and purposely contrived Snares against one whole Party. If such a form of words would not, another should do their business: By this means, you, in the first place your selves were overstript: Multitudes dispossest of their Livings: The Vineyard let out to others: The Lord Jesus the Master of it deprived of many of his Faithful Labourers: And the poor sheep (*what had they done?*) bereft of their accustomed spiritual food, to the hazard of their Immortal Souls. Among many arguments therefore for Liberty in other Papers, from *Policy*, *Convenience*, *Reason of State*, and *Reason of Religion*, we have this one to offer you of a more binding Nature, an Argument from *Justice*, *Righteousness*, and *Restitution* to the wronged. It is true, that the Places they once had, are filled and disposed of: But there are others enough. There are many of those who possess *theirs*, do also keep their *own*, and keep more. There are many who are *Canons*, *Deans*, *Prebendaries*, that are also *Parsons*, *Rectors*, *Vicars*: Who have Benefices and Honours by Heaps, and by the Bushel. If it shall please you therefore in some *Bill* on the Anvil, to take cognizance of *Pluralists*, that for the preventing an idle, scandalous, covetously overgrown, unprofitable Ministry, every man who hath more than one *care of Souls*, or one Dignity, shall give them up into a publick

lick stock, or to a general distribution, you shall do the Church-right, and the Ejected right; you shall give such Drones their due, and God his due, and strew the way by this means, for making your Grace intended in such a Bill of signification. In the Name of God, Sirs, let us move you to this; if it were only *hoc vice*, for a present needful conjunction of us at this season. We see the Jaws of the Jesuit, and the Sectary opening upon us; If the sober Protestant Interest be not united, we perish. We know who will be ready to stamp here, and throw dust in the Air; for it is these *Sons of the Harp*, whose voice is *give, give*, that will never be contented with a *single portion*. A *Dignity* therefore with a *Living*, let them be allowed: But one *Dignity*, and one *cure of Souls* should be all, though they cut themselves with *Laures*. It is this vile hard Objection at the bottom, the Priests covetousness, and corruption, rather than their dispute about things indifferent, that really hinders the Churches Peace and Prosperity.

We shall therefore for the gentle enforcement of this, humbly offer you some Reasons.

It is manifest, that Pluralists were allowed in the Church at first upon the account only of necessity; because they had not Ministers enough that could Preach to the people. They could get some to *Read*, but none to give them a *Sermon*. And upon this account, they admitted one to be Pastor to several Congregations. But now the Land does abound with so many Ministers, who have *never a cure*, and such as are no less learned, and more painful in Preaching, than those that have *three or four*, we will plead with these men before Heaven, and before you who are the Heads of our Tribes assembled, that it is not pious, nor fit, nor political, (that is, not for the common good) that this Custom should continue, when the Reason is ceased; especially when so many of those that are put out, have Families, and scarce Bread to subsist.

It is a saying *ancient*, the times of *Constantine*. That when the Church had but *Wooden Chalices*, it had *Golden Priests*; but when they had *Golden Chalices*, and rich Benefices, they had *Wooden Ministers*. That *Religion brought forth Riches*, and the *Daughter hath deceived the Mother*. It is pit that men who are called to this Function, which requires them to be Examples to others of humility, lowliness of mind, self-denial, and mortification, should be led to much

much

much as they are into the temptation of Pride, Idleness, and Excess by their Preferments. For as it hath been reflected upon by some of the House, and other Gentlemen who served the King without reparation, as an error of the State in the late Restauration of Episcopacy, that the profits of the Church-Lands for Twenty years together should be bestowed at once on a few single persons, which would have leisurely required a great many : so are they really as little pleased to have the Priest, who was perhaps a while ago, their Servitor at the University, or Tenants Son, or something otherwise than they will say, should by the sudden accumulation of so many places as he hath had Simonically or Gratuitously conferred upon him, be huffed up to that pompous height and vanity, of his Coach and Liveries, as makes him to become the very envy of his Patron, and scandal to his profession.

It is true, that the Nobility, Spiritual and Temporal, have the Prerogative to capacitate a Minister according to Law for divers Livings : But when Jesus Christ the great Master of the Vineyard does command their labour, and then they ~~lead the Flock over which~~ *th. Holy Ghost hath made them Overtures*, there is no such privilege to be urged, but in the nature of the thing it is void. There is no Custom, no Right, no Law, if the King, Lords and Commons, if the whole World should agree to make it, that can be of force against the Gospel. *Nulla datur potestas ad malum*.

There are few of you who are Protestants in either Houses, without jealousy, that the Romanists were borrowing an Helve for their Hatchet out of the Wood of the Fanatics; and that if they came to obtain their purpose, it is not hard to conjecture, which Trees were like to go down, one after another. As those men of the Church therefore are so willing you should do something for the security of your Religion and them, it is meet that they should be ready to contribute to it. That they who preach the Gospel to others, should be persuaded to put the great duty of it, which is self-abrenuntiation into practise themselves. For that man is not fit to be a Minister of Christ, or admitted into his Vineyard at all, that does not look more to his Work, than to his Penny, and seeks not the welfare of Jerusalem above his advancement; and had not rather convert one Soul, than get two Livings, and have a Prebend to spare. According to what every mans mind is most upon in his Sphear (the publick Interest, or his own) such is his value more or less.

However this be, whether they are willing or not, there is a *universale eminent dominium* in the Supreme Legislative Authority, that puts an end to all Civill (if there arise any) *de jure privatorum*. And we will conclude with this, That whatsoever things are therefore substantially profitable for the Community, and are retarded only by the interest of private persons, these are things most truly worthy the Consultation of Parliament. God Almighty keep alive the true *English* publick Spirit. God preserve the Protestant Religion, and the Person of the King. God prosper an accommodation.

We of the Kings Party (says Judge Jenkins) did, and do desire all Grievances of the People, as much as any men living: In his Lex Terræ. It is a certain truth, This Kingdom without an Act of Oblivion, and a most regard had to tender consciences, will unavoidably be ruined: In the Armies Indemnity. I say again, That without a Gracious general Pardon from His Majesty, and a favourable regard had to tender Consciencs, there will be neither Truth nor Peace in the Land, nor any man secure of any thing that he hath: In his Cordial for the good People of London. And again in His Declaration for Tryals of Treasons, and all Capital Crimes to be by a Jury, They that love this Common-wealth, will use all means to procure an Act of Oblivion, and tender Consciencs, a just and reasonable satisfaction, else we must all perish first or last.

A Bill Exemplified to the Purpose of these Sheets.

WHereas there are many Jealousies risen about Popery, which makes it even necessary to the Peace of the Nation, that the Protestant Interest be united and strengthened by all good and lawful Means: And to this end, there being this one proper Expedient, to wit, the removing the Occasion of Divisions, which several Persons do find to themselves in those late Injunctions, which yet were intended to the same purpose of Concord in the Nation: Be it Enacted, — That an Explanation of these Impositions, and such Alleviations, be allowed to the tenderly Considerate, and peaceably Serupulous, as follows.

In the *Act of Uniformity*, By the Declaration of Assent and Consent to all Things, and every Thing contained in, and prescribed by the Two Books, Of Common-Prayer, and of Ordering Priests and Deacons, we under-

stand not, that these Books are in every minute particular, infallible, or free from that Defect, which is incident to all Human Composition: but that they are in the main Contents, to be sincerely approved and used. And we do therefore allow this Declaration to be sufficient, if it be made to the use of the Book in the Ordinary Constant Lords-Day Service, notwithstanding any Exceptions some may have against some Things in the By-Officers, and Occasional Service, the Rubrick, and otherwise. And for the Ceremonies, which are made, and have been al-

These Materials were provided, during the sitting of that Parliament, which passed the Act of Uniformity, and other like Rigorous Acts; and are therefore drawn up in the Form of an Explanatory Bill, because it was supposed, they were not like to Repeal their own Acts, though they might be got to Interpret them. But now we have a New Parliament, and that after another also Dissolved we may expect quicker work: Yet will the proposing these Things still to view, have their use, both for repressing such as have said, The Non-conformists know not what they would have; and setting some Measure to our own Desires, and the Parliaments Condescensions about the same.

ways, and on all hands, held to be only indifferent Things, we think fit that they be left to the Consciencés and Prudence of Ministers, and People, every where (excepting the *Cathedrals*) to use them, or forbear them, as they judge it most meet for their own and others Edification. Provided, that if any Person will have his Child Baptized with the Sign of the *Cross*, or stands upon any thing else, hitherto required by the Service-Book; if the Minister himself scruple the Performance, he shall have always some Assistant, or Curate, ready to do it.

In the same *Act*, By those Words in the *Subscription*, that *It is not lawful to take Arms against the King, upon any Pre- tence whatsoever*; we intend no new or strange Thing, but

the rightful Maintenance only of the *King's* Authority against Rebellion, according to the common Determination of Learned Writers, in the Case of Subjection to Princes. By the Words, *I abhor the Position of taking Arms by the Authority of the King, against any Commissioned by him*, we never thought of Advancing the Arbitrary Commissions of the *King*, above Law; but by those *Commissioned by him*, we

Our Reasons for these Interpretations, appear in our Arguments before, against the Oxford Oath, and this Subscription; which we can by no means submit to, without them. There is moreover this Clause [And I will conform to the Liturgy of the Church, as it is now by Law Established] we desire may be spared; because upon our Declaration before of Assent and Consent, (which must be the Bounds of our Sense thereof) it is needless altogether, and can serve but for a Snare only to Mens Consciencés.

understand such as are Legally Commissioned, and in the Legal Pursuit of such Commission. By the Clause which follows, that requires a Renunciation of all Endeavour of any Alteration of Government in the Church or State, we never meant to deny any Free-Born Subject his Right, of Choosing Parliament-Men, or Acting in his Place for the Common Good any way, according to Law; but that he shall Renounce all such Endeavour, as is Seditious, or not warranted by the Constitution of the Nation; and particularly,

cularly, such an *Endeavour* as was Assumed in the late Times, without, and against the Consent of the King. And for the rest of the *Subscription*, which is enjoyned but to the Year 1682. Be it enacted, that it cease presently, and be no longer enjoyned.

And forasmuch as there is an Oath prescribed and required of all *Non-conformist* Preachers, that Reside in any Corporate-Town, by a certain Act of this *Parliament*, made at Oxford in the 17th. Year of His now Majesties Reign, Entituled, *An Act for restraining Non-conformists, from inhabiting Corporations*: We do further declare, That it shall suffice any Man, for the Enjoyment of his Free-born Liberty, of Inhabiting where he think best;

and serve him also instead of the fore-mentioned *Subscription*; to take that Oath in this Form of Words following. I A. B. do swear, That I hold it unlawful upon any Pretence, to take Arms a-

This Oath is of the same Contents with the Subscription before; and so impose both, is nothing else but the multiplying Wrath, and laying Load on the already Laden.

gainst the King, his Government or Laws: And that I disclaim that dangerous Position, of taking Arms by his Authority, against his Person, or any Legally Commissionated by him, in the Legal Pursuit of such Commissions: And that I will not Endeavour any Alteration of Government in the Church or State, in any way or manner, not warranted by the Constitution of the Kingdom, or any otherwise than by Act of Parliament. And as soon as any Man hath taken the Oath thus, he shall be discharged of all Penalty for his Omission before.

We do declare moreover, That whereas it is required also in the Act of *Uniformity*, that every Minister who enjoys any Living, or Ecclesiastical Preferment, shall be Ordained by a Bishop; and there are several Persons of late, who in case of Necessity, for want of Bishops, took Presbyterian Orders: Our meaning is not in any wise to disgust the Reformed Churches beyond the Seas, and make it necessary

for such to be Re-ordained to the Office; but that they receive this Second Imposition of

There is Reordination ad Officium, which (we say) is generally decayed by Divines: or Re-ordinatio ad Exercitium particulare, which may be irrefragably proved from Acts 13. 2, 3. with Acts 14. 26. and consequently allow'd to serve this Occasion.

And whereas there is a Subscription also in the Canons, and the Canonical-Oath of Obedience, imposed on most Ministers by the Bishops, that have given some of the greatest Occa-

If the Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance be taken, and the Articles of the Church subscribed, and the Declaration before to the Common Prayer, made, we see no need of boyling over these Three Things again for us, in the Canons, unless it be for a Crambe Repetita, on purpose to Kill us. Neither do we think the putting any Honest Men who fear God, out of the Vineyard, to be so good a Thing for her, that our Wise Church of England should use so much Care and Industry as She takes, that she may not miss to do it.

sion to Non-conformity heretofore; which yet never passed into Law by any Act of Parliament: We do further declare, That nothing more of that kind shall be required of Ministers hence-forward, than was made, and held necessary, by the Act of the Thirtieth of Elizabeth.

And in regard there hath been great Offence taken by Conscientious Ministers, at the Bishops, (or their Courts) commanding them to read the Sentence of Excommunication against some or other of their Parish, for such Faults as they think not at all worthy of so great a Censure: We declare it but a just Thing, that every Minister be first satisfied in the Cause, or else be exempted from the Execution

As we think, there is no Elder in the New-Testament, who is not a Pastor, and that there is no Lay-Pastor; so do we account, that there is no Pastor or Presbyter, but such as have the Power both to Rule and Teach, committed to them by Christ: Yet do we for all that, apprehend it not only Lawful, but Expedient, for the ordinary Minister of our Parochial-Congregations, (when the Church is National) to commit part of their Charge, (to wit, that of Ruling) in Actu Secundo, to some few among them,

who

of that Charge; and that the Bishop (or his Court) provide some other Person, that is satisfied about a it, to do it.

So much as this (and what hath preceded) comes to, we shall be unwilling to fall off from Episcopacy, upon the Points of Ordination and Jurisdiction.

And to the intent, that a free Search after Truth may not be discouraged in the Pursuit of Concord; and many other Scruples avoided upon that Account: We declare, That

though an *Authentick Interpretation* be required, as to the Substance of all Laws, yet in the Articles of the Church, (which are *Theses* for Agreement, and not Laws) and the *Homilies*, a *Doctrinal Interpretation* shall be held sufficient for an *Assent* or *Subscription* to them.

And because the very Superintendency of Bishops, and that Subjection to them which is required by the Constitution of the Realm, is or may be an Hinderance to many sober Ministers, and other Protestants, of coming into the Church, who are ready to consent to the Doctrine, but not to the Discipline or Government of it: We do declare, That so long as any Person or Party do acknowledge the King's Supremacy, as Head of the Church in this Nation, and obey their Ordina-

who are more Emphatically fitted for the Work (that is, the *Evangelical Ministry*) and consequently to the Bishop: So that, if this Fundamental Right of Governing their own Flocks be but acknowledged to Reside in every Presbyter, by granting

The *Authentick Interpretation* of an Article, is the Meaning of the Major Part of the Convocation: A *Doctrinal Interpretation*, is the Meaning of any one of the Doctors there present, (and consequently, of any other Learned Expounder) who are supposed to have the Liberty to abound in their own Sense, so long as they can agree in the Words of the Article Established. And this Clause therefore we put in upon Mature Consideration, in regard more especially to the Conscientious Latitudinarians, who being some Arminians, and some Calvinian, cannot otherwise Subscribe the Doctrine of the same Theses; as the Reader may see more in such another Book as this, call'd The Healing Paper, out of which this Bill for Union is newly Collected; as out of several other Papers of the same Author, the whole discourse besides (excepting a little now) was pick'd up, and in the Year 75. laid them together

That is, Although there be some that cannot acknowledge our Diocesan Prelates to be Christs Officers, distinct from the Elders in Scripture: Yet so long as they can live Peaceable Lives, in Obedience to them, as Ecclesiastical Magistrates under His Majesty, for the keeping the several Congregations, in their Precincts, to that Gospel-Order, which themselves allow, and for super-vising their Constitutions in things indifferent, that nothing be done, but in Subordination to the Peace of the Kingdom, (which is a Notion wherein the Judicious of every Party may acquiesce, and expressed by us therefore in these very Words before, p. 31.) it is sufficient unto National Church-Union.

Be it therefore Enacted by this Present Parliament, That if any Person be willing to Conform to the Present Establishment of the Church of England, and her Service appointed according to these Explanations, Alleviations, Declarations, Lenitives, or Cautions, he shall be admitted to any Ecclesiastical Preferment, and enjoy the use of his Ministry without any Molestation: All Statutes, Canons, or Laws to the contrary notwithstanding.

And for the making this Act of better Signification to the Concerned, and the Prevention of that Scandal which is raised on the Clergy, through the Coverousness of some, in heaping up to themselves all the Preferments they can get, when others have scarce Subsistence for their Families, and the Souls of many People are thereby neglected: Be it further Enacted, That no Clergy-Man for the Three next

Years ensuing be suffered to Enjoy any more than one Living, or Cure of Souls, and one Dignity, (or

We propose these Things, we confess, as if we were in Republica Platonis; but we should be glad to see any Fruits of this kind,

(or

(or other Ecclesiastial preferment) *and of those who act in face Romu-
li may expect what is Right and Just,
and ought to be done in one thing, and
to be sought; though what is like to be
done, or will be done, is another.*
at one time; and that every Man
(without Exception) that hath
more than one of Either, shall
immediately give up the rest to
be distributed among those who
shall be brought off from their Non-conformity, upon the
Terms of this Act into the Established Order. Which that
they may also be obtained, and possessed with a clean Con-
science, and that grievous Corruption of *Simony* may be
Extirpate out of the Land: Be it enacted moreover, that
every Patron that shall henceforward present his Clerk to
any Living, shall have the Oath called *The Simonian Oath*,
imposed on himself, no less than on the incumbent: And
if he refuses to take it, that then the Bishop shall have im-
mediate Power (taking only the same Oath) of Presentati-
on in his Room.

And forasmuch, as there are some Ministers of a good
Life, that cannot (according to their Judgments) allow of our
Parochial Churches, nor a Book of *Liturgy*; but do choose to
Worship God and *Jesus Christ*, in the way of their Gathered
or Separate Congregations; and crave the Protection and
Clemency of the King, upon their
Allegiance: as other Subjects
be it finally Enacted, for the
Happiness and quiet of the Realm,
and the Reduction of these Men
by other means than *this*
which have hitherto proved
unsuccessful, that every Christian
Subject throughout the Land,
that profess the Reformed Re-
ligion, and be not Convict of
Popery, be pardoned all Faults
and Penalties, incurred upon the
Account

*There are two Parts of this Bill; one
for Concord or Coalition with all such
as can joyn in Parochial Communion, in
the Clauses before: The other for For-
bearance of those that Cannot, in this
last Clause. For, what shall we do with
such? We must not Knock them on the
Head: They must therefore have Time.
If the Parliament will begin with the last
first, that is, a Suspension of the Penal
Statutes, and then let us treat for a Com-
position after, we consent with all our
Hearts, and like the Method best. Then
Abner called unto Joab, and said, shall
the*

the Sword, devour for ever! Knowest thou not that it will be Bitterness in the latter End! How long shall it be, ere thou bid the People return from following of their Brethren.

Account of any Fore-past Non-conformity; and that they shall not, * during these Seven Years next ensuing, be prosecuted upon any Penal Law for their Consciences, in the Matter of Religion; They carrying themselves Innocently and Peaceably, with Submission to the Civil, and without Disturbance to the Ecclesiastical Government, now settled in the Nation: All Statutes or Canons to the contrary notwithstanding.

* Until by a farther Act of Parliament, or a Convocation, those that are fit to be Toleraed, and the intolerated, be distinguished.

In short.

A Repeal of all our Laws about Conformity, unto the 13th. of Elizabeth, or A New Act of Uniformity, or, The King's Declaration concerning Ecclesiastical Affairs at His first Coming in, turn'd into a Law, were *Comprehension*.

His latter Declaration to all his Loving Subjects (some few Things in Both yet a little considered) made so, were *Indulgence*.

A Bill for *Comprehension* with *Indulgence*, both together will do our Business. An Addition, or Clause in it, against *Pluralities*, will do it with *Supererogation*.

Deo Gloria.

